

2007 Annual Report

History

The Coordinating Board for Early Childhood was established by statute in August 2004. The Board's first meeting was in December 2006 and all 17 of Governor Blunt's appointments to the board were confirmed by May 2007.

Mission-Related Accomplishments

Board members have spent many hours learning about current public and private programs for young children. Each department representative has provided a matrix of state and federally-funded programs with more extensive discussion of several specific programs, including Missouri MPP, PAT, MO Quality Rating System, state-funded home visitation programs, Early Head Start and Head Start.

Consistent with the power of the Board to develop a comprehensive statewide long-range strategic plan for a cohesive early childhood system, the Board formally adopted the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS) Plan in May 2007. This plan had been developed over the past several years with input from a broad range of stakeholders. It has been adopted by each of the departments represented on the Board and by the Governor.

Recommendations for the 2008 Legislative Session

The Board has gone on record as recommending the following actions for the 2008 Missouri legislative session and FY2009 budget:

MO QRS

Establish and maintain a Missouri Quality Rating System (MO QRS) for licensed early education providers, with the necessary funding to implement an assessment system and the support services that are necessary to improve the quality of education. Make participation in the MO QRS voluntary, except for providers who receive direct state grants or services for quality improvement and expansion from DESE and DSS.

EHS

Increase state funding for Missouri's Early Head Start (EHS) program. Expanding EHS improves the quality of education for all children in those programs.

Child Care Subsidy

Adjust the current child care subsidy formula to raise the level of eligibility, address gaps between the cost of care and reimbursement levels, and alleviate the "cliff effect" that happens when families immediately lose support at a certain level of income.

Plan of Work for 2008

The Board has begun preliminary discussions on the following issues and will be formulating recommendations over the next several months:

Pre-K

School districts are becoming increasingly involved in providing educational services for three and/or four year-olds, often called Pre-K. The Board is interested in promoting a system of high quality, publicly funded voluntary Pre-K that will complement and align with community-based programs serving children from birth to five. A committee of the Board is currently working on this issue.

Support for Quality Care

The Board is interested in how current technical assistance and professional development services for early childhood professionals can be more efficiently and effectively delivered to promote high quality programs for all young children. A committee of the Board is currently working on this issue.

Early Screening

Early screening to identify potential physical, mental and social developmental problems and referral for appropriate intervention can improve a child's ability to learn and will eventually save the state money on additional services over time. The Board is interested in promoting a system that consistently screens the development of all young children by the age of two.

Home Visitation Programs

Home visitation programs for parents of young children have been proven to have beneficial impact on later development. The Board is interested in strategies for better coordination of programs and for expanding more comprehensive, outcomes-based home visitation programs throughout the state, especially for high-risk families.

Approved December 11, 2007